



**4 FOOD PACKAGE/DRAFT ISSUANCE**

*Effective: 3/1/98*

**4.44 Returned Food**

*Revised: 1/3/00*

**POLICY:** Foods that were purchased with WIC drafts should be fresh and wholesome. If they are not, they should be returned to the store from which they were purchased for an exact exchange within a reasonable period of time after the date purchased.

**BACKGROUND:** Inappropriate use of foods purchased with WIC drafts is considered fraud and/or abuse of the WIC Program. Returning WIC foods to a vendor for cash or credit or for another food item is a violation of WIC rules, and the vendor and/or participant will be sanctioned. However, WIC participants have the right to receive fresh and wholesome foods with their WIC drafts. If foods are not fresh and wholesome when purchased, the WIC participant should return that food to receive a replacement.

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. REASONS ALLOWED FOR RETURNING FOOD**

1. Food was outdated at the time of purchase
2. Food was purchased within the freshness dates on the package, but the food was spoiled.
3. There was an official “recall” of the food by the manufacturer or health officials.

**B. REASONS NOT ALLOWED FOR RETURNING FOOD**

1. Formula or infant cereal no longer consumed by infant
2. Formula not tolerated by infant or child
3. Food not wanted by WIC participant/parent
4. To exchange for another WIC or non-WIC authorized food item
5. To receive cash or other consideration for return of WIC food
6. Food was not stored properly or consumed within a reasonable time causing it to lose its freshness after the date of purchase



**C. RETURNING FOOD TO THE STORE**

1. Food, including formula, that is not in good condition should be returned by the participant to the store where it was purchased.
  - a) The store should replace it for the exact same food in the same amount, (e.g. 12 oz. box of Cheerios for 12 oz. box of Cheerios). It may not be exchanged for a different food item, e.g. Cheerios for Tasteeos.
  - b) Local project staff should call the store if the store refuses to replace the food that is not fresh or wholesome. Inform the store of their responsibility to replace WIC foods that are not fresh or wholesome when purchased.
  - c) If a store refuses to replace the food, provide transaction details on the Vendor/Participant Complaint Form (DOH 4322) and forward to the State WIC Vendor Section.